



State Board of Fire Services MINUTES

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

Office of the State Fire Marshal, Sacramento, California



Chair/Ex-Officio

Kate Dargan

State Fire Marshal

Co-Chair

Mike Esparza

California State Firefighters
Association

Members:

Richard Blanco

Fire District

Steve Brown

California Fire Chiefs
Association

Jerry Davies

Insurance Industry

P. Michael Freeman

California Metropolitan
Fire Chiefs Association

David Gillotte

International Association
of Fire Fighters

Robert Magee

City Government

Michael Nelson

County Government

Lou Paulson

California Professional
Firefighters

Michael S. Williams

California State
Firefighters Association

John Winder

CDF Firefighters

Glenn Ziemer

Fire Districts Association
of California

Fire Service Labor (vacant)

California Labor
Federation

Ex-Officios:

Ken McLean

CAL FIRE

Matthew Bettenhausen

California Emergency
Management Agency

Dan Terry

California Fire Fighter
Joint Apprenticeship
Committee

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kate Dargan, State Fire Marshal

Mike Esparza, California State Firefighters Association

Richard Blanco, Fire District

Steve Brown, California Fire Chiefs Association*

Jerry Davies, Insurance Industry

P. Michael Freeman, California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association*

David Gillotte, International Association of Fire Fighters

Robert Magee, City Government*

Michael Nelson, County Government

Mike S. Williams, California State Firefighters Association

John Winder, California Department of Forestry Firefighters

Glenn Ziemer, Fire Districts Association of California

* attended via telephone conference call

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Matthew Bettenhausen, California Emergency Management Agency

Ken McLean, Deputy Director of Fire Protection, CAL FIRE

Lou Paulson, California Professional Firefighters

Dan Terry, Chair of the California Fire Fighters Joint Apprenticeship Committee

STAFF:

Melodie Durham, Deputy Chief, Law Enforcement

Tonya Hoover, Assistant State Fire Marshal (Executive Director)

Marge Yarbrough, Deputy State Fire Marshal III Specialist, Law Enforcement

Mike Richwine, Division Chief, State Fire Training

Ramiro Rodriguez, Deputy State Fire Marshal III, State Fire Training

Rodney Slaughter, Deputy State Fire Marshal III, State Fire Training

Diane Seiple, Staff Services Analyst, Support Services

Judy Bankert, Office Technician, Support Services

GUESTS:

Dan Coffman, Statewide Training and Education Advisory Committee

Dale Evenson, Riverside County Fire Department

Tennis Tollefson, Sierra College

Kevin White, California Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee

Kim Zagaris, California Emergency Management Agency

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chief Kate Dargan, State Fire Marshal (SFM), called the meeting to order at 1000 hours at the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) Headquarters, 1131 S Street, Sacramento, California.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call of the SBFS was conducted, and a quorum was established.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made by the board members, staff, and guests. **Chief Dargan said she would like to have a short paragraph biography on each board member. To accomplish that, she will be providing OSFM staff with a form to mail out to the members.**

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chief Dargan asked for any changes or a motion to approve the minutes.

A motion was made by Mike Esparza to approve the minutes and was seconded by Richard Blanco. The motion passed with Robert Magee abstaining due to not attending the September meeting.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Kate Dargan announced the recent retirement of Ruben Grijalva, Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the appointment of the new director, Del Walters.

6. PROGRAM and ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – State Fire Training

A. Delivery Issues – On-Line Hybrid Beta Test/Acceptance of Final Draft Report

Dan Coffman told the group that this issue was first broached with State Training and Education Advisory Committee (STEAC) three years ago, and a number of instructors were queried to see what the fire service needed relative to on-line or hybrid fire officer classes. The responses from the instructors were looked at, as well as the learning domains in each of the classes, and an outline was created depicting which courses could be delivered on-line and which would be more appropriate for in the classroom. Alan Hancock College was then asked to conduct a beta test on delivery of those classes. The general consensus from the instructors, students, and other participants was that these classes could be taught on-line or in a hybrid fashion.

Mike Richwine interjected that STEAC had very vigorous discussion and debate on this issue, and ultimately the members voted to accept this report while recognizing State Fire Training (SFT) has a lot of internal processes to work through regarding these courses. The next step will be forming a subcommittee to work through all the issues and bring a report back to STEAC showing what needs to be done for implementation.

The five recommendations from the *Company Officer Internet/Hybrid Beta Test Final Report* were:

- The courses residing in the CFSTES Fire Officer Series of classes can be successfully delivered on the internet and in an Internet/Hybrid fashion. (This recommendation in no way mandates this delivery method and is not designed to replace the classroom delivery of any of the Level I classes.)
- As the Company Officer Certification Program is being redesigned to meet the new NFPA 1021 and the needs of the California Fire Service, we recommend that the curriculum committees design the courses with the Internet/Hybrid course option in mind. Course outlines should clearly identify learning domains that may be taught online and learning domains that must be taught in the classroom.
- Each curriculum development committee should have at least one person with on-line instructional experience to assist in identifying learning domains suitable for web based Instruction.
- Explore the use of standardized “off the shelf” textbooks and other courseware to be used for these CFSTES classes. Exams would be tied to these textbooks and courseware.
- The generic courses developed by the volunteer instructors for this beta test be given to SFT for duplication and made available for instructors interested in teaching on-line courses.

Mike Esparza remarked he strongly supports this format and this direction as one of the options for educating our future firefighters and current fire service personnel. Glenn Ziemer expressed his concern about enrollee drop off during the courses. Dan Coffman suggested that the ability to electronically collect tuition payments up front would help solve that problem. Steve Brown expressed his support and added he felt it helps with the Blueprint 20/20 goals. He also said it is important to ensure the courses are up-to-date. Kate cautioned the members that from the point of approval the process would take a couple years to work through data base revamping, IT infrastructure development, and creating on-line capacities.

After further discussion among members and guests, **David Gillotte moved to accept the report recommendation as submitted, and Mike Esparza seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.**

B. Delivery Issues – New Accreditations/Re-Accreditations

Rodney Slaughter summarized the accreditation site visits of the facilities listed below and the recommendations made by the site team to STEAC. STEAC, in turn, is making the following recommendations to the SBFS:

- *San Pasqual Reservation Fire Department* – (New) Approve for three years as a local academy.
- *Los Angeles County Fire Department* – (New) Approve for three years as a local academy.

- *Mt. San Antonio College* – (Renewal) Approve for five years as an accredited regional training program.
- *San Jose Fire Department* – (Renew) Approve for five years as a local academy.
- *Lake Tahoe Community College* – (New) conditionally approve as an accredited regional training program for one year.
- *Monterey Peninsula College* – (New) Approve as an accredited regional training program for three years.

After a few questions from the members, **John Winder moved to approve the accreditations as outlined above and Glenn Ziemer seconded the motion. The motion carried with Steve Brown abstaining in regard to Monterey Peninsula College because he is an instructor there.**

Mike Esparza suggested that a list of all accredited academies be provided at the next board meeting. Rodney Slaughter said he would do so.

C. STEAC Update – Certification

1. NIMS I-400 – Revisit Discussion on Equivalencies

Mike Richwine reminded the group that at the board meeting on February 20, 2008, the SBFS voted not to accept USFA and FEMA courses as equivalent to SFT recognized NWCG. The decision was based on a discrepancy in the I-400 minimum course hours between the NWCG (20-22 hours) and USFA and FEMA (16 hours for each). The apparent discrepancy turned out to be a clerical error, and all three minimum course hours are identical.

Based on the new information, **David Gillotte made a motion to accept the courses as equivalent, and Michael Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

2. Community Risk Officer Certification Training Standards (CTS)

Ramiro Rodriguez briefed the group about the Community Risk Officer CTS which were recently updated and approved by STEAC. Previously community college partners of the State Fire Marshal training system had not been able to offer a comprehensive Public Safety Officer training program due to the outdated material. The name of the certification track was changed and divided into three levels:

- Community Risk Educator (Teach)
- Community Risk Specialist (Supervise)
- Community Risk Officer (Manage)

David Gillotte asked if there was any differentiation between sworn and civilian officers, and Ramiro Rodriguez said there was not as the goal was to make the standards attractive to both. Mike Williams asked if this certification process could be mandated. Kate Dargan responded that many people may claim to be “fire experts,” when they have not gone through the certification process. This issue has not yet been addressed by the State Fire Marshal or STEAC. Mike Richwine added training and certification are voluntary at this point.

Kate Dargan and Robert Magee both spoke briefly about the current fiscal situation faced by all public entities, resulting cutbacks, and the impact that has on services to the community.

John Winder moved to accept the certification training standards, and Richard Blanco seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Chief Fire Officer Certification Training Standard Update

Mike Richwine reminded the board of their decision at the February 20, 2008, meeting to adopt the Company Officer CTS with the requirement that SFT include an EMS management section to address the training responsibilities of a Chief Officer who is responsible for their department’s EMS program. SFT hosted a group of subject matter experts who managed fire service EMS programs to develop standards for future training programs in the Company Officer Certification.

Steve Brown made a motion to accept the Company Officer CTS with the EMS management task included, and Michael Nelson seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Kate Dargan asked that the full Chief Officer components be included in the next agenda packet.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update – SB828 Task Group

Marge Yarbrough briefed the group on the events which led to the production of a draft report which was compiled by the Accelerant Detecting K9 Standards Development Working Group. Co-chairs Marge Yarbrough and Mike Esparza, along with Tom Hoffman, Law Enforcement Staff Chief, met in January 2009 with Chief Dargan to go over the draft report. Chief Dargan directed staff to post the draft report on the OSFM web site and request public comment (which is due by April 16). A consensus on this issue was difficult to achieve due to differing philosophies, and the draft represents the best compromise possible. When the public comment period is concluded, the comments received will be taken back to the working group to be considered. They will determine if any changes need to be made before the final draft is submitted to Chief Dargan. Mike Esparza added part of the working group's goal was to help establish credibility in court regarding accelerant detecting K9's.

B. Department of Insurance/CAL FIRE MOU

Tonya Hoover said meetings continue with the Department of Insurance on education for the fire service and for the insurance industry regarding issues concerning defensible space, wildland urban interface (WUI), and building construction. The State Fire Marshal's Office has applied for a grant related to WUI to complete the development and implementation of a Fire Safe Inspector track that will tie in to the State Fire Marshal track. This grant would be used for outreach education addressing concerns of the fire service, private sector, insurance industry, and any WUI stakeholders. The grant will fund the project as a whole, a project manager, and reimbursement for any group or task force that develops CTS's or curriculum associated with the project. There is a need to educate people about defensible space, what the legislation says (SB1595), how to accomplish defensible space inspections, who is responsible for those inspections, and what the intent of such an inspection is.

Kate Dargan pointed out that SB1595 directed the CAL FIRE director to identify what a "fire expert" was if a local insurance company wanted more than 100 feet of defensible space. The fire expert is the fire chief of the authority having jurisdiction or, in the case of state responsibility areas, the CAL FIRE unit chief. Jerry Davies said he thinks this defining of the fire expert will be very helpful to insurance companies. Glenn Ziemer wondered if type and density of vegetation, annual rainfall, and topography could be considered when determining defensible space. Mike Esparza expressed support for that idea and he said informational updates on this issue would be helpful to the board. Dave Gillotte also expressed support for Glenn Ziemer's idea and said that the flood control zones might be a model to look at for establishing factors to consider when determining appropriate defensible space. John Winder observed that fuel modeling and fire history were built into the fire hazard maps distributed to local agencies. Kate Dargan remarked that the wording for defensible space is "up to 100 feet," so there is some flexibility within that directive.

Mike Esparza asked if the hazard mapping process had been completed, and Kate Dargan responded that the State Responsibility Area lands were completed and the Local Responsibility Area jurisdictions were approximately 80 percent complete. Dale Emerson said Riverside County Fire, in cooperation with the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, has developed a draft guideline that addresses topography, fuels, historical fire behavior, normal weather conditions, and sometimes—depending on the area—might even call for a fuel model. If anyone would like to see the draft, he would provide them with a copy. Tonya Hoover added that one of the items coming out of the discussion of SB1595 was if the insurance industry wanted to go beyond 100 feet in defensible space, they needed to justify that to the local fire official. Glenn Ziemer pointed out that ultimately the decision whether to even write the policy rests with the insurance company.

Kate Dargan asked the board if they would like to have this issue brought before the board on a regular basis, and the responses were positive. ***Jerry Davies said he would like to do some research, poll some companies and bring the results back to the board. Kate Dargan suggested a 10-15 minute presentation for the next board meeting, and she will ask OSFM staff to give a quick update on the fire hazard maps.***

C. California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) Task Force

Mike Esparza reported that there should be a CICCS meeting scheduled within the next few months. The California version of the NWCG 310.1, CICCS Wildland Qualifications Guide, needs to be finalized and hopefully adopted by next fire season. There is a question and answer section in the Office of Emergency Services web site and other places for agencies to view. The bottom line goal for the task force is to insure the safety of our firefighters. John Winder asked about the status of identification cards, and Mike Esparza replied there is a standard card agencies are allowed to use and other cards created by local agencies have been approved.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. SBFS Future Goals and Two Year Work Plan

Kate Dargan told the group that each year the OSFM goals for the next two years are identified. Yesterday at the senior staff meeting, the following were determined to be the top five priorities for the next two years:

- Residential Sprinklers
- Arson/Fireworks Program Improvement
- Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) – Fire Prevention
- Information and Analysis Improvements
- SFM Organizational Leadership and Succession Plan

In approximately one month visitors to the OSFM web site will be able to see the two year plan, what we want to accomplish, and when we want to accomplish it in the following areas:

- Executive Office
- Support Services
- Communications
- Codes and Regulations
- Fire and Life Safety
- Pipeline Safety
- State Fire Training
- Law Enforcement
- Wildland Fire Prevention
- Fire Engineering
- Fire Planning
- Fire and Rescue Assessment Program (FRAP)
- Statistics – CAIRS/NFIRS

Kate Dargan asked the board if they wanted a more hands-on approach in determining the priorities or would the board rather have the OSFM senior staff make those determinations and place them in front of the board. Glenn Ziemer expressed the opinion that a hybrid combination of both would be good. John Winder added that when the OSFM had items that needed support from the board from a goal perspective, that would be the appropriate time to bring the issue before the board. Mike Esparza agreed with that perspective—especially if the issue were germane to the SBFS mission statement. He appreciates the information that is gleaned from the SBFS meetings that can be taken back to each respective organization. Also, if the OSFM feels they need input on an issue, bring it before the board. Michael Nelson interjected that he likes the way the board functions now with staff bringing the issues before the board for their input and advice.

Kate Dargan said continuous updates could be given on the top five priorities and the work plan in general, or milestones could be put in place--at which time the issue would be brought before the board. ***She suggested they discuss this at the next board meeting after a chance to absorb the work plan and the top five priorities.*** She would like to know if any members find issues in the work plan they feel are more important than the top five priorities listed. Mike Esparza commented he believed the top five priorities listed were all germane issues for the board.

Kate Dargan commented she has given instructions to our communications staff to focus on the SBFS in the 2009 Annual Report which will come out in February 2010. She would like to showcase the success in bring the SBFS “back to life.” Biographies of board members will be included in that report.

9. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Mike Richwine reported that training enrollment numbers are holding steady. Kim Zagaris remarked that Cal EMA is working on their new organization and finishing up reimbursements for the last fire season. They are also finishing replacing engines with Type 1 engines with money provided by the Governor’s office. Fifteen Type 3 engines were put into service last year, and they have been working out very well. Kim Zagaris also discussed some current funding issues.

Glenn Ziemer stated that the Fire District Association of California’s main focus has been working with the California State Association of Counties, League of Cities, and other local government partners trying to keep the state from looking at local government as a funding source. There are a number of agencies facing financial issues due to property tax write-downs especially in areas that were high growth prior to the current economic downturn.

Michael Nelson commented that the California State Firefighters Association (CSFA) volunteer committee has finished their five-year strategic plan for volunteers in California. The proposed plan is going before the CSFA board soon, and ***he will supply the board members with copies of the plan at the next meeting.***

Mike Esparza reported there recently was a meeting between FIREScope and the Blue Ribbon Commission Task Force to privately and professionally discuss leave early/stay and defend issues. There was a joint press release issued from the California Professional Firefighters and the California Fire Chiefs which reiterated that the mission of the California fire service is to save lives, so they strongly advocate leave early and stay alive. He also announced the firefighters memorial is going to be held on October 17, 2009, and the CSFA gala awards dinner will be held the night before. He asked if the group knew anyone who was deserving (civilian or public safety member) of award of merit or valor, please let him know.

Tonya Hoover commented that the OSFM, Code Development Division, was in the pre-rulemaking phase of the code adoption process for the next cycle. One of the items of great significance is the residential fire sprinkler initiative, and there has been a lot of good input from the fire service, building industry, water purveyors, and building officials supporting this initiative in California. Eventually the operational side of the fire service will need to be informed of these changes, be involved in them, and understand them. This issue is not only about building construction, it is about firefighter safety, response, and tactical safety.

Another issue the OSFM is dealing with, according to Tonya Hoover, is green building. We are receiving calls about vegetative roof tops, photovoltaic/solar panels, alternate fuels and fuel pumps, and different kinds of construction methods on walls for safe rooms. We are asked how will the fire service deal with those, how do you want us to train our people on those topics, and how do we get the word out. Tonya Hoover asked if any of the agencies or organizations represented at the meeting hear about innovative building pathology affecting the fire service and the tactical strategies, please give her a call with that information.

Tonya Hoover recounted that recently there was a subcommittee hearing in Southern California concerning mobile home parks. The OSFM is working with Housing and Community Development (HCD) to address the WUI and mobile home parks. At an upcoming implementation meeting, the discussion will focus on mobile home parks authority, how to distribute the information, how to implement some of the WUI building construction standards relating to mobile home parks. Glenn Ziemer asked about HCD requirements that came out in 2001 which were supposed to require the upgrade of water supply systems in the jurisdictional domain of HCD. He said none of those improvements were ever made in the north coast, and he wondered about the status of those requirements. ***Tonya Hoover said she would have an answer to that question at the next board meeting.***

Tonya Hoover advised the group OSFM Pipeline Division will no longer be able to train local fire departments on hazardous liquid pipeline training. However, there is some good training courses and information available through the National Association of State Fire Marshals. Contact information regarding those courses and information will be available in the annual State Fire Marshal Report which will be posted to the CAL FIRE website next month.

Jerry Davies informed the group about Farmers' green initiatives in the form of an eco rebuild endorsement for homeowner's policies beginning in July 2009. He also expressed a desire to educate the insurance agency and others through a series of articles regarding the intensive training firefighters go through. Kate Dargan said if he wanted to draft a few articles, some of the OSFM staff could give him the fire service perspective on them. Jerry Davies also talked about the fire spraying trucks some companies are putting into operation, and he would be interested in input from the group and others regarding those trucks. Kate Dargan said CAL FIRE had a published policy position on that issue as do a number of other fire organizations, ***and she said she would point him to those policy positions.***

Steve Brown announced an economic summit in April 2009 that will be put on by the Fire Chiefs Association and the International Association of Fire Fighters.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dale Evenson asked if there was a place on the OSFM website featuring important legislative items to watch. There isn't, but ***Kate Dargan said she would discuss that possibility with the Legislative Branch of CAL FIRE.***

11. SET MEETING DATES

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, and the August meeting will be on Wednesday, August 26. There was some discussion about dovetailing the November meeting with the Joint Apprenticeship Committee Conference being held in Palm Springs November 18-20, but no decision was made.

12. MEETING ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.